Envision in Depth

Reading, Writing, and Researching Arguments

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FOURTH EDITION

Christine L. Alfano Alyssa J. O'Brien

Envision in Depth

READING, WRITING, AND RESEARCHING ARGUMENTS

FOURTH EDITION

Christine L. Alfano and Alyssa J. O'Brien
Stanford University

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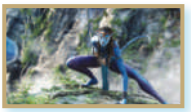

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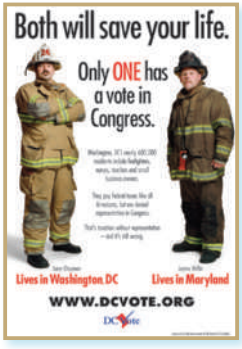

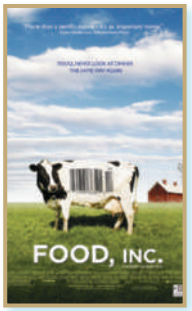

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PREFACE

The Story of This Book

Several years ago, we (the authors) met as colleagues in the Program in Writing and Rhetoric at Stanford University. Our shared focus on teaching writing through attention to both written and multimedia texts led us to look for materials we could use in the classroom that would provide both excellence in pedagogical instruction—attending to such essentials as thesis statements, style, integrating sources, and avoiding plagiarism—along with cutting edge and even *fun* examples that offer sound rhetorical models for analysis and research. While we were able to gather materials from a variety of sources, our students wanted more than a collection of handouts: they wanted a textbook that they could use to guide and inspire their development as writers.

The result was *Envision*, an argument and research guide designed from the ground up to serve the needs of real student writers. In fact, throughout the many editions, students remain an indispensable part of the process, reading our drafts in progress, offering suggestions, and submitting their own writing as examples. Now in its fifth edition, *Envision* has expanded and changed over time, but remains true to its original vision: guiding students through the processes of analysis, argument, source evaluation, and research-based essay writing while keeping the examples fresh and relevant to student lives. Students learn to analyze written texts and a range of visual texts, from cartoons and ads to websites and film, while working through the nuts of bolts of writing thesis statements, titles, introductions, conclusions, in-text citations, and MLA-style bibliographies. Additional writing lessons focus on diverse modes of argument, plagiarism, academic document design, and multimodal production.

After the release of *Envision*, we received positive feedback from many instructors but also learned of the additional challenge that many faced: they needed to pair the rhetorical lessons of a textbook like *Envision* with a collection of substantive, timely, and interesting readings on a range of subjects that would interest students. In response, we created *Envision in Depth*, which contains the same material as the original *Envision* but also includes Part IV, a section that offers students the opportunity to build on the lessons from the earlier parts, inviting them to respond in writing to key controversies and develop research projects from source materials.

Each of these later chapters opens with an overview, asking pressing questions and presenting diverse perspectives to consider. We then provide a range of readings, visual texts, interviews, competing articles, and media excerpts on the topic, along with thorough pedagogical guidelines to help students engage critically with the material. Headnotes frame each piece and offer essential context. Reflect & Write questions follow each text to provide opportunities for class discussion, written assignments, and even research projects on related materials. The prompts for collaborative writing enable in-class group work or simply ideas for additional assignments. Finally, each chapter concludes with a robust series of questions: both Analyzing Perspectives on the Issue and From Reading to Research Assignments prompt students to put readings in conversation, consider multiple interpretations at once, or conduct independent research and writing to advance their skills and expertise in meeting key composition outcomes.

As we now finalize the fifth edition of *Envision* and the fourth edition of *Envision in Depth*, our continued hope is that these textbooks might help students develop the skills, confidence, and enthusiasm for writing, researching, and communicating effectively about issues that matter to them.

What's New in This Edition

Feedback from our insightful reviewers as well as suggestions from the many students and instructors who have used *Envision* and *Envision in Depth* in the classroom have been indispensable in guiding our most recent revisions. In this new edition, you'll find the same commitment to supporting our readers in developing critical competencies in analysis, argumentation, and research as in prior editions. However, you'll also find increased attention to helping students accomplish the following learning outcomes:

- **Learn from Model Writing:** New and updated annotated articles and student writing show readers exactly how to move from invention to argument, whether they are analyzing a written text, a visual text, or developing a research-based argument.
- **Experiment with Different Modes of Argumentation**: The refreshed section in Chapter 3 on classical argumentation, Toulmin logic, and Rogerian argument offers students guidance in exploring different strategies of arrangement to construct effective arguments.

- **Explore Contemporary Issues:** New readings and examples have been integrated into the first eight chapters of *Envision in Depth*, focusing on relevant and timely cultural issues: the BlackLivesMatter movement, the Charlie Hebdo shootings, the "cult" of Apple products, fast food marketing, the influence of online social networks, photo manipulation in teen fashion magazines, women in computer science, the addictive properties of sugar, vegetarianism, and texting and driving.
- **Understand Advanced Concepts in Rhetoric:** In addition to the focus on rhetorical appeals and the canons of rhetoric found in prior editions, this new edition features expanded coverage of *ethos* and *logos*, as well as more detailed examination of persona and rhetorical stance.
- **Focus on the Writing Process:** Expanded sections on invention in Chapters 3, 4, and 6—complete with additional student samples—encourage students to find modes of prewriting that best suit their learning style, writing habits, and the parameters of their writing tasks. In addition, a new section on developing a writer's portfolio in Chapter 8 encourages readers to develop reflective practices to help them identify their strengths and growth as writers.
- **Develop Strategies for Analyzing Arguments in Diverse Media:** Student writing in the chapters showcases ways to analyze a variety of types of argument, from written to visual arguments. In addition to guided instruction in the body of each chapter, the Spotlighted Analysis feature offers students the opportunity to apply strategies of rhetorical analysis to a diverse range of texts, from traditional written arguments, to political cartoons, advertisements, photographs, posters, websites, and even film trailers.
- **Engage Deeply with the Research Process:** A refreshed section on search methodologies includes discussion of adapting search methodology to different search engines (i.e., Google vs. academic databases) and how to effectively conduct Boolean searches. In addition, the streamlined discussion of evaluating sources is designed to provide students with a useful process for assessing materials for their own research once they find them. Lastly, a brief introduction to Joseph Bizzup's BEAM approach to research encourages students to move beyond categorizing sources in terms of primary and secondary materials to considering how to use those sources to produce effective research-based arguments.

With regard to the changes in **Part IV**—where students can explore topics in rich complexity through engaging with a range of interrelated texts—we have continued to focus on providing a robust set of readings designed to work in conjunction with the first three parts of *Envision* to help students develop critical literacy skills that they can use in their own writing and research. Supported by careful pedagogical scaffolding, this refreshed set of readings has been updated to speak to students about issues that matter in their lives today.

The Substance at a Glance

From the very beginning, our philosophy in *Envision in Depth* has been to teach students about writing, rhetoric, and research by considering the different modes of argument that operate in our culture every day. Each chapter uses interactive and engaging lessons, and focuses both on analyzing and producing words (print materials, articles, blog posts, and even tweets) as well as on writing *about* images and other contemporary media (cartoons, ads, photographs, films, video games, and websites, to name a few). In this way, the book teaches *critical literacy* about all kinds of texts. Moreover, we provide numerous student writing examples and professional, published readings—both with annotations—in order to reinforce the writing lessons in each chapter and to demonstrate how students might successfully implement such strategies in their own texts. Our aim is to help students accomplish specific writing tasks for your courses as they encounter, analyze, research, and produce a range of compositions.

We have designed *Envision in Depth* to be flexible enough to adjust to different curricula or teaching styles. You can either follow the chronological sequence of chapters—moving from analysis to argument, bringing in research, and then considering design and presentations—or you can consult the chapters and assignments in any order that meets the needs of your course and curriculum. More specifically, we have organized *Envision in Depth* into four parts:

Part I: Analysis and Argument

Chapters 1 through 3 encourage students to become proficient, careful readers of rhetorical texts and to learn practical strategies for crafting thesis statements, rhetorical analysis essays, and position papers incorporating various perspectives. Students learn how to analyze the forms of persuasion in verbal and visual texts—from short articles and essays to political cartoons, ads, and photos—with an emphasis on rhetorical conventions. At the same

time, we teach students key rhetorical concepts for effective communication, such as attending to audience, understanding rhetorical appeals and fallacies, and attending to exigency and motive.

Part II: Planning and Conducting Research

Chapters 4 and 5 focus on strategies of research argument for sustained writing projects. The lessons in this section of the book take students through key writing practices: writing a research proposal, keeping a research log, locating sources, and understanding the complexities of evaluating and documenting sources. Students have sample proposals, outlines, and annotations to consult as well as articles, propaganda posters, and Websites to analyze.

Part III: Drafting and Designing Arguments

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 teach students how to write and deliver an effective research-based argument, with a focus on the process of drafting and revising. Students learn how to identify, assess, and incorporate research into their own arguments, while avoiding plagiarism and accomplishing successful documentation of sources. They learn to present their writing effectively through a discussion of document design—both for academic papers and for visual and multimodal arguments. They also gain important skills in practicing the canons of rhetoric and differentiating among levels of decorum.

Part IV: Readings

The last five chapters expand the scope of the book through readings, writing activities, and research prompts on clusters of topics. Our revised selections for the fourth edition focus on today's most engaging topics, which we hope will interest both students and teachers. These topics include debates over the food industry, explorations of new writing and social media technologies, challenges to contemporary sports culture, issues related to representations of crisis and resilience, and current controversies regarding citizenship.

Meeting WPA Outcomes for Writers

Each chapter in Parts I, II, and III offers specific activities and assignments designed to help students meet the WPA Outcomes for First-Year Composition. The following table indicates the chapter's specific learning goals as they are aligned with the WPA outcomes statement, the major assignments offered in each chapter, and the media focus.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CHAPTER TITLE	WPA OBJECTIVES MET BY THIS CHAPTER	MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS	MEDIA FOCUS
1: Analyzing Texts and Writing Thesis Statements	■ Understanding the rhetorical situation ■ Considering relationships among audience, text, and purpose ■ Textual analysis ■ Developing thesis statements	■ Personal narrative essay ■ Rhetorical analysis essay	■ Cartoons, comic strips, and editorial articles
2: Understanding Strategies of Persuasion	■ Strategies of argumentation ■ Understanding rhetorical appeals: *logos, pathos,* and *ethos* ■ Fallacies or exaggerated uses of rhetorical appeals ■ Importance of *kairos* and *doxa*	■ Contextual analysis essay ■ Analysis of rhetorical appeals and fallacies ■ Comparison/contrast essay	■ Advertisements and written analysis of ads
3: Composing Arguments	■ Introductions and conclusions ■ Arrangement and structure of argument ■ Considering various modes of argument: Toulmin, Rogerian ■ Developing persona and rhetorical stance ■ Addressing opposing opinion in an argument ■ Writing with style	■ Position paper ■ Classical argument assignment ■ Toulmin and Rogerian argument analysis ■ Synthesis essay	■ Photographs, newspaper articles and images, opinion pieces, visual analysis essays
4: Planning and Proposing Research Arguments	■ Generating and narrowing research topics ■ Prewriting strategies ■ Developing a research plan ■ Drafting a formal proposal	■ Visual brainstorm ■ Research log ■ Informal research plan ■ Research proposal	■ Propaganda posters, historical images, rhetorical analysis essay

CHAPTER TITLE	WPA OBJECTIVES MET BY THIS CHAPTER	MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS	MEDIA FOCUS
5: Finding and Evaluating Research Sources	■ Research strategies ■ Evaluating sources ■ Distinguishing between primary and secondary sources ■ Locating sources ■ Conducting field research, interviews, and surveys ■ Best practices for note taking	■ Critical evaluation of sources ■ Annotated bibliography ■ Field research ■ Dialogue of sources	■ Magazine and journal covers, Websites, and annotated bibliographies
6: Organizing and Writing Research Arguments	■ Organizing and outlining arguments ■ Multiple drafts and revision ■ Integrating research sources: summary, paraphrase, and quotations ■ Writing and peer review	■ Formal outline ■ Peer review and response ■ Integrating sources ■ Writing the research argument	■ Film and movie trailers, film review and critique, drafts and revisions
7: Documenting Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism	■ Understanding intellectual property ■ Best practices in documenting sources: in-text citation and notes ■ MLA-style rules and examples	■ Working with multimedia sources ■ Ethical note-taking ■ Citation practice ■ Producing a Works Cited list	■ Documentation examples, MLA-style essay
8: Designing Arguments	■ Understanding the conventions of academic writing ■ Writing an abstract and bio ■ Decorum: appropriate voice and tone ■ Relationship between rhetorical situation and types of argument ■ Formatting and genre considerations ■ Transforming written arguments into visual or spoken texts	■ Writing an abstract ■ Constructing a bio ■ Integrating images in academic writing ■ Creating electronic arguments using multimedia (audio and visual) ■ Considering different delivery techniques	■ Academic design examples, abstracts, bios, op-ads, photo essays, Websites, posters, slidedecks, and multiple media

Online Resources

The Instructor's Manual

The Instructor's Manual for *Envision in Depth* provides teachers with pedagogical advice for each chapter, including conceptual overviews, teaching tips for working with the main concepts and reading selections in the chapter, and suggestions for classroom exercises and writing assignments. The Instructor's Manual also offers ideas for organizing the reading and exercises according to days of the week. For access to the Instructor's Manual, please contact your Pearson representative.

MyWritingLab for Composition

MyWritingLab is an online practice, tutorial, and assessment program that provides engaging experiences for teaching and learning.

MyWritingLab includes most of the writing assignments from your accompanying textbook. Now, students can complete and submit assignments, and teachers can then track and respond to submissions easily-right in MyWritingLab-making the response process easier for the instructor and more engaging for the student.

In the Writing Assignments, students can use instructor-created peer review rubrics to evaluate and comment on other students' writing. When giving feedback on student writing, instructors can add links to activities that address issues and strategies needed for review. Instructors may link to multimedia resources in Pearson Writer, which include curated content from Purdue OWL. Paper review by specialized tutors through SmartThinking is available, as is plagiarism detection through TurnItIn.

Respond to Student Writing with Targeted Feedback and Remediation

MyWritingLab unites instructor comments and feedback with targeted remediation via rich multimedia activities, allowing students to learn from and through their own writing.

Writing Help for Varying Skill Levels

For students who enter the course at widely varying skill levels, MyWritingLab provides unique, targeted remediation through personalized

and adaptive instruction. Starting with a preassessment known as the Path Builder, MyWritingLab diagnoses students' strengths and weaknesses on prerequisite writing skills. The results of the preassessment inform each student's Learning Path, a personalized pathway for students to work on requisite skills through multimodal activities. In doing so, students feel supported and ready to succeed in class.

Learning Tools for Student Engagement

Learning Catalytics Generate class discussion, guide lectures, and promote peer-to-peer learning with real-time analytics. MyLab and Mastering with eText now provides Learning Catalytics—an interactive student response tool that uses students' smartphones, tablets, or laptops to engage them in more sophisticated tasks and thinking.

MediaShare MediaShare allows students to post multimodal assignments easily—whether they are audio, video, or visual compositions—for peer review and instructor feedback. In both face-to-face and online course settings, MediaShare saves instructors valuable time and enriches the student learning experience by enabling contextual feedback to be provided quickly and easily.

Direct Access to MyLab Users can link from any Learning Management System (LMS) to Pearson's MyWritingLab. Access MyLab assignments, rosters, and resources, and synchronize MyLab grades with the LMS gradebook. New direct, single sign-on provides access to all the personalized learning MyLab resources that make studying more efficient and effective.

Visit www.mywritinglab.com for more information.

Acknowledgments

Our work with *Envision* and *Envision in Depth* has spanned many years, students, writing classes, and colleagues. However, one element remains constant: this project started out inherently collaborative and remains so. The revisions we have made in this edition and our ongoing work in this field could only have been accomplished through the ongoing support and guidance from others. For that reason, we'd like to offer our deepest thanks to all those who helped us with the book over the years, and in the revision of this edition in particular.

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In addition, we are grateful to our other "reviewers"—our students who use our textbook in the classroom and who are always happy to share praise—or suggestions—about *Envision*. In particular, we are grateful for the students who played a concrete role into shaping this new revision by contributing their own writing to serve as models to inspire our readers: Oishi Banerjee, Ali Batouli, Tucker Burnett, Vincent Chen, Clare Conratto, Molly Fehr, Will Hang, Savi Hawkins, Samantha Kargilis, Lucas Lin, Catherine Mullings, Emmanuel Omvenga, Ryan O'Rourke, Wanjin Park, Stephanie Parker, Trevor Rex, Claire Shu, Miranda Alfano-Smith, Jared Sun, Ada Throckmorton, Michael Vela, and Thomas Zhao.

We'd also like to express our gratitude to our colleagues at Stanford who have supported our revisions to *Envision* and *Envision in Depth* and whose commitment to pedagogy and to their students inspires our own. In particular, we'd like to thank Julia Bleakney, Karli Cerankowski, Erica Cirillo-McCarthy, Annelise Heinz, Donna Hunter, Kiersten Jakobsen, Raechel Lee, Kimberly Moekle, John Peterson, Emily Polk, Carolyn Ross, Felicia Smith, and Trisha Stan, whose advice, scholarship, and inspiring pedagogy helped enrich our work in this text. In addition, we'd especially like to recognize those colleagues who graciously allowed us to include versions of their exemplary class-tested activities in this new edition: Mary Stroud, who contributed the Twitter dialogue of sources activity in Chapter 5; Marvin Diogenes and Ethan Plaut, who permitted us to use a version of their Accordion prewrite activity in Chapter 4; Russ Carpenter and Sohui Lee, whose scholarship on poster design informed our section on that topic in Chapter 8; Sarah Pittock, whose activity on titles inspired our own expanded section; and Jennifer Stonaker,

who provided insight and guidance on the rhetoric of podcasting. So much of what we've accomplished over our years of work on the *Envision* series has been possible by the supportive atmosphere found in our academic home in Stanford's Program in Writing and Rhetoric; the people and the program continually remind us of the importance of providing the best resources and instruction to students and of fostering a culture of intellectual curiosity, sharing, and collegiality among our teaching faculty.

We'd also like to extend out thanks to our expert team at Pearson, the dedicated drivers of the *Envision* series: Joe Opiela, and Brad Potthoff; our development editor David Kear; Katy Gabel and her staff at Lumina Datamatics; our contract support Jim Miller; and Michael Greer, who went from guiding the drafting of the first edition of Envision to now helping us refresh and reinvigorate the reader section of the most recent edition of *Envision in Depth*.

Of course, there's another expert team to thank as well: our friends and family who keep life running smoothly even amid the creative chaos of writing and revision. Without their love, support, and expansive understanding, this revision would never have been transformed from a marked-up manuscript to the bound copy that now sits before you.

Lastly, thank you, our readers, for your interest in *Envision*; we hope you find the book as useful to your teaching as it has been rewarding for us to work on and use with our own students over the years.

Christine L. Alfano and Alyssa J. O'Brien

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Part I

ANALYSIS AND ARGUMENT

CHAPTER 1

Analyzing Texts and Writing Thesis Statements

Chapter Preview Questions

1.1 How do we read and analyze texts rhetorically?
1.2 How do we define the rhetorical situation?
1.3 How do exigence and purpose affect persuasion?
1.4 What are effective strategies for analyzing rhetorical texts?
1.5 How should I brainstorm parts of an essay, including the thesis statement?

Everywhere around us, words and images try to persuade us to think about the world in certain ways. We can see this persuasive power at every turn: from newspaper articles to television broadcasts, blog posts, advertisements, political campaign posters, Facebook status posts, tweets, and even video footage circulated online. In each case, such texts—whether verbal, visual, or a combination of the two—try to move us, convince us to buy something, shape our opinions, or make us laugh.

Consider the text in Figure 1.1 by Mike Luckovich, a Pulitzer Prize–winning cartoonist who publishes in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*. Luckovich created this cartoon after the 2011 assassination attempt on Gabrielle Giffords, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, outside a Safeway store in Tucson, Arizona. Six people were killed, including a 9-year-old girl. Giffords herself was critically injured, along with 12 other people. The incident raised concerns over political speeches and Website images that had used gun metaphors to target Democrats such as Giffords in upcoming elections. Some feared that such language and imagery might have contributed to the attack. In response to the controversy, Luckovich composed a cartoon as a persuasive text indicating his view. How does his text use both words and images to persuade audiences to think a certain way about the top term: "Violent Rhetoric"? Look at the hierarchy of values, beginning with "happy talk" at the bottom, moving through

"warm conversation" and "friendly debate" to a more vigorous "spirited discussion." Notice how the words then become more negative, including "angry discourse" and "hateful speech." While we usually consider "hateful speech" to be the worst form of communication, Luckovich places "violent rhetoric" above it, as the very apex of dangerous discourse. The cartoon is ironic since when most people think of *rhetoric*, they often think of political rhetoric, which they perceive as either empty and meaningless (all talk, no action) or worse, as negative: harmful to the reputation of others, fear-mongering, and even hateful. The cartoon emphasizes this common view placing the words "violent rhetoric" at the top.

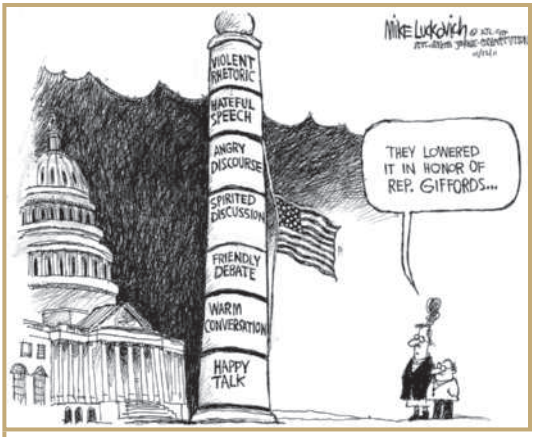

FIGURE 1.1 Mike Luckovich's political cartoon demonstrates through words and images how people commonly view "rhetoric" as a negative and dangerous form of communication.

But understanding this cartoon depends not just on analyzing the words. The location of words in particular places within the visual—and the visual elements themselves—also contribute in crucial ways to the meaning of the text. The lowered flag, for instance, might indicate that Giffords nearly died from her critical injuries, and indeed six people did die. The purposeful lowering of the flag to half-mast is itself a form of visual communication, well understood across America; it represents the nation's act of honoring a deceased person. The dome of the Capitol Building in the background suggests that the government has lowered the flag and wants people to move from "violent rhetoric" to "spirited discussion." In this way, the cartoon combines words and visual details to suggest both a tribute to Giffords and the need for calmer, gentler political communication. That is our understanding of the cartoon's argument when we **analyze the text rhetorically**. As you develop your skills of critical thinking and rhetorical analysis, you will also learn how to interpret and write your own arguments about such texts.

At the same time, you will learn how to apply your skills of analysis across a range of media, including printed or spoken words. With regard to the assassination attempt, many writers commented on the event through newspaper articles, on blogs, via email, and on social media. In a post on the political blog *Daily Kos*, for example, Barbara Morrill used the term *rhetoric*

right in her title: "Violent Rhetoric and the Attempted Assassination of Gabrielle Giffords." While the title seems objective in tone, the writer draws on very strong language in the opening paragraph in order to connect the two parts of the title:

> In the two days since the attempted assassination of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, the debate has been raging over the culpability of the violent rhetoric that is so commonplace in today's political climate. Which of course has led to the rapid-fire peddling of false equivalencies by the right, where now, saying a congressional district is being targeted is the same as actually putting cross-hairs on a district and saying it's time to "RELOAD."

By accusing the right of "rapid-fire peddling," the author frames words through a gun metaphor in a way that creates a vivid image in the reader's mind. She also refers to the metaphoric language that politicians had used—targeting a district, crosshairs, and "reload"—as evidence for her claim. The details of her written text parallel the elements of the cartoon (Figure 1.1). As you develop your skills of analysis about texts, keep in mind that you can understand them better if you look closely at all the specific elements, whether verbal or visual. Once you recognize how texts function *rhetorically*—that is, how texts try to persuade you and shape your opinion about the world around you—then you can decide whether or not to agree with the many messages you encounter every day. To grasp this concept, let's follow one hypothetical student—we'll call her Alex—as she walks across campus and note the rhetorical texts she sees along the way.

1.1 How do we read and analyze texts rhetorically?

UNDERSTANDING TEXTS RHETORICALLY

By shadowing Alex and noticing what she notices, you can construct her **personal narrative**, or written account of her journey, about the rhetorical texts she sees along the way.

Let's begin in her dorm room, which Alex and her roommate have decorated with a concert tour poster, an artsy map of New York City, a poster for the women's basketball team, and a photo collage of pictures from their spring break cross-country trip. As she prepares to leave, she smiles as she glances at a meme she's printed and taped over her desk: the black-turtleneck-wearing Hipster Barista, with the caption, "$120,000 Art Degree … Draws faces in latte foam."

As Alex walks down the hall, she pauses when a friend calls her into the lounge to watch a brief clip from a rerun of *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* on his laptop. Oliver is in top form, providing a satirical critique of the militarization of American police forces, and Alex and her friend laugh for a few minutes about the sketch before she heads out. Walking down the stairwell, she glances briefly at the flyers that decorate the walls—for a charity dance for the victims of a recent earthquake, a dorm meeting about a ski trip, and a rally against immigration laws. She does a double-take to look at the clever design of a flyer for the Zen club (see Figure 1.2), making a mental note about the meeting time, and then walks into the cool autumn air.

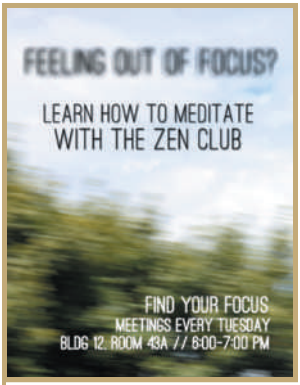

FIGURE 1.2 A flyer that Alex notices on her way to class.

Outside, Alex looks down at her smartphone, scrolling through recent Instagram posts as she walks along. She sees one friend's updated profile photo, another's pictures from a recent trip to New Orleans, and a third's reposting of a link to a parody video of a Taylor Swift song. She stops at the outdoor café and checks her Twitter feed while waiting for her coffee, amused by her favorite celebrity's posting about the Academy Awards. As her coffee arrives, her phone buzzes, and she opens a funny Snapchat photo from her younger sister, pausing for a moment to send a selfie of her own, which she captions with the phrase, "Must have coffee." Looking at the time, she realizes she's running late and hurries off to class.

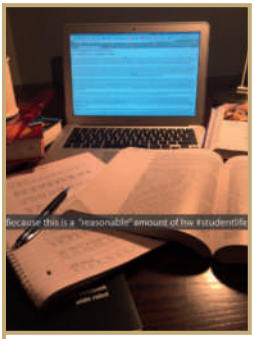

FIGURE 1.3 A snapchat from Alex's younger sister.

Now Alex has only 2 minutes before class starts, so she takes the shortcut through the student union, past a sign advertising the latest Apple laptop, and then heads outside and crosses in front of an administration building where a group of student protestors are chanting and waving signs demanding that the university divest from fossil fuels. She weaves alongside a cluster of gleaming steel buildings that constitute the engineering quad and passes the thin metal sculpture called *Knowledge* that guards the entrance to the library.

Finally she reaches her destination: the Communications department. Walking into the building, she stops to glance at the front page of the school newspaper, stacked by the door; intrigued by the headline, "Greek Life Claims University Targets Them," she grabs a copy to read later. She

slips into the classroom for her Com 101 class on Media and Society and realizes that the class has already started. Ducking into the back row, Alex watches the professor advance his PowerPoint slides to one containing key questions for that day's class (see Figure 1.4). As she sits down, the TA passes her a handout, and she opens her laptop to take notes. She's immediately distracted by posts on the social media sites that pop up, calling for her attention: targeted advertisements, viral videos, even Buzzfeed quizzes. Ignoring them, she opens a blank document instead and then turns to examine the handout, which includes an editorial about a tragic shooting at the offices of a French satirical magazine.

With Alex safely at her seat, think about how many texts you noticed along her journey. Flyers, ads, posters, videos, Websites, newspapers, television shows, photographs, memes, sculpture, signs, PowerPoint slides, even architectural design: each is an example of rhetoric. Why? Because each text offers a specific message to a particular audience. Each one is a persuasive act. Once you begin to look at the world rhetorically, you'll see that just about everywhere you are being persuaded to agree, act, buy, attend, or accept an argument: rhetoric permeates our cultural landscape. Just as we did above, you might pay attention to the rhetorical texts that you find on your way to class and then construct your own personal narrative consisting of words and images. Learning to recognize the persuasive power of texts and read them rhetorically is the first step in thinking critically about the world.

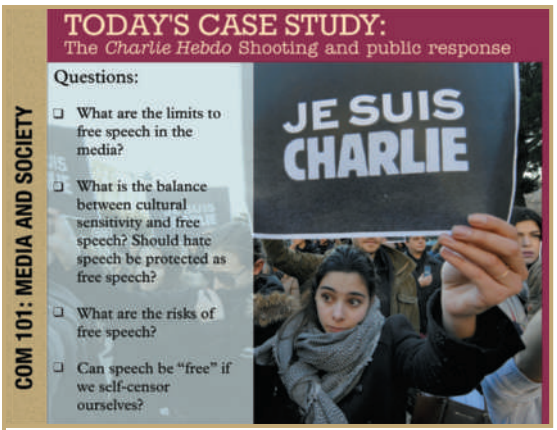

FIGURE 1.4 PowerPoint slide from Alex's class.

WRITER'S PRACTICE

MyWritingLab

Look back at the texts that Alex encountered in Figures 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4. How do they attempt to persuade their audience? For each one, jot down some notes about each text's message and the different ways the texts try to make their arguments. Consider how they use words and images, alone and in combination, to convey their message.

UNDERSTANDING THE RHETORICAL SITUATION

1.2 How do we define the rhetorical situation?

In one of the earliest definitions, the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle characterized **rhetoric** as *the ability to see the available means of persuasion in any given situation*. While Aristotle's lessons in rhetoric emerged in the fourth century BCE as a form of instruction for oral communication—specifically, to help free men represent themselves in court—today, the term *rhetoric* has expanded to include any verbal, visual, or multimedia text that aims to persuade a specific audience in a certain place and time. More generally, you can understand rhetoric as the strategies people use to convey ideas; in the words of scholar and rhetorician Andrea Lunsford, "Rhetoric is the art, practice, and study of human communication."

To understand how a rhetorical text works, you need to analyze how it targets a specific **audience**, how it has been composed by a specific **author**, and how it conveys a particular **argument**. This dynamic relationship is called the **rhetorical situation**, and we have represented it with a triangle in Figure 1.5.

As a writer, when you compose persuasive texts, you need to determine which strategies will work to convince your audience in a particular situation. There are many different choices to consider, and that is why rhetoric is both a dynamic and a practical art. Imagine, for instance, that you are involved in the following rhetorical situations and have to decide which strategies would be most persuasive for each case.

- **Attend to *audience.*** If you were a politician writing an editorial for a newspaper or speaking at an interview on CNN about your definition of marriage, you would use strikingly different metaphors and statistics depending on which constituency (or *audience*) you are addressing.
- **Attend to *author.*** If you wanted to publicize a

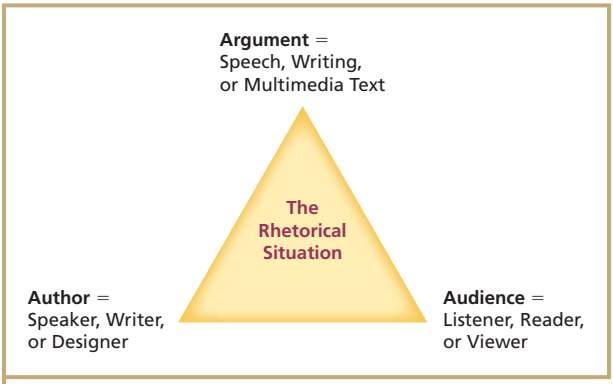

FIGURE 1.5 The rhetorical situation is dynamic and governs all communication, whether oral, written, or multimedia.

message against drug use to local middle school students, you might compose pamphlets, emails, presentations, or posters with information graphics, and each one would be designed based on your position as *author*—teacher or police officer? student or parent?—while trying to reach that teenage audience.

- **Attend to *argument.*** If you were fashion industry intern updating the company's social media marketing campaign, you would revise the message (or *argument*) of the advertisements to fit the media, whether Facebook posts, tweets, or even Internet videos.

Cartoonist Jorge Cham offers us an example in Figure 1.6 of how the rhetorical situation affects persuasion in relation to a communicative act that might be even more familiar to you: a students' email to the instructor. In a panel for his series *PhD comics*, he shows how a misunderstanding of the rhetorical situation can sabotage successful communication.

What the comic illustrates is the instructor's analysis of the student's communication and his implicit criticism that the student misreads his *audience* and therefore composes an ineffective *argument.* The agitated arrows point us to evidence for this interpretation: misspellings, punctuation mistakes, jargon, and an uninformed message (the answers to the email apparently are all in the syllabus). However, the comic also invites us to critique the instructor's assessment of the rhetorical situation. On the one hand, the fictional instructor has treated the email communication like an essay, scoring it with red-inked annotations; on the other, he uses an angry voice that seems inappropriate to the instructor–student relationship ("OMG, what are you, 14?"; "we are not friends"). In both cases, he fails in the same way as his student to create a moment of effective communication.

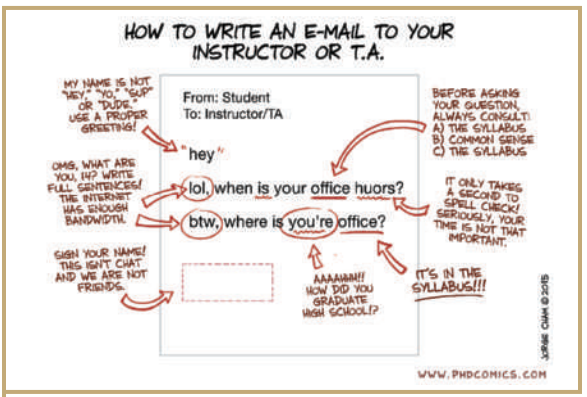

FIGURE 1.6 This comic from *PhD comics* offers a pointed analysis of a hypothetical student's misjudging of the rhetorical situation in emailing his instructor.

In fact, there are two layers to this cartoon, two rhetorical situations that we can explore (see Figure 1.7): the fictional situation of the email, where the relationship is between student (writer), instructor (audience), and

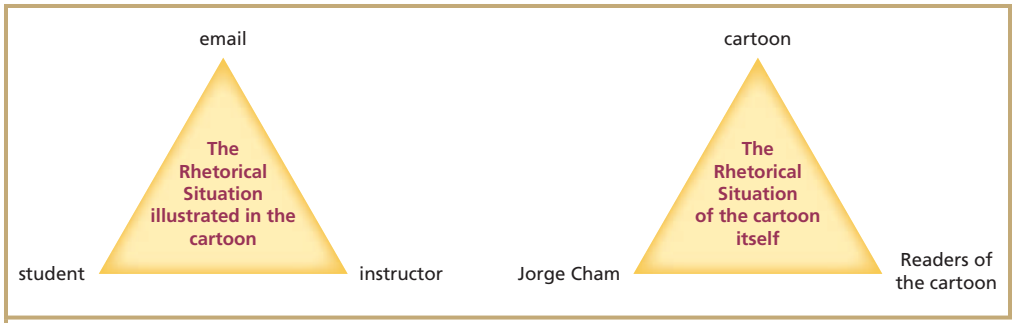

FIGURE 1.7 The cartoon's two rhetorical situations.

email (argument), and then the rhetorical situation of the editorial cartoon itself, which triangulates the relationship between Jorge Cham (writer), the cartoon's readers (audience), and cartoon (argument). Cham encourages us to engage with both levels explicitly by including the asterisk and footnote. In his qualifier, "No offense to those actually called 'Hey,' 'Yo,' 'Sup,' or 'Dude,'" he differentiates his own voice from that of the fictional instructor, helping us remember there are dual levels at work in the cartoon.

UNDERSTANDING EXIGENCE AND PURPOSE

1.3 How do exigence and purpose affect persuasion?

As you move toward better understanding rhetoric, another important concept to consider is **exigence**—the *urgent demand* that writers feel to respond to a situation, his or her motive for writing. Have you ever seen a news article or heard about an event on campus that prompted you to respond strongly? When this happens, in rhetoric, we call this the **exigencies of a situation**, or the demands put on a writer to respond immediately and urgently in the attempt to take action or raise a concern about a specific problem or issue.

Think about tweets sent out in response to a sports team winning a championship, a flash of celebrity gossip, a political debate, or a crisis on campus. These are all contemporary instances of exigency. The scholar who gave us the rhetorical situation shown in Figure 1.5, Lloyd Bitzer, emphasized that *rhetorical exigency* happens when change is possible: "An exigence is rhetorical when it is capable of positive modification and when positive modification *requires* discourse or can be *assisted* by discourse." That is, rhetorical exigency exists when there is the possibility that **discourse** (i.e., forms of

communication) can effect change. For instance, policies regulating parking on campus can potentially be modified through discourse or language, but drought and death cannot.

Understanding exigence can help us likewise understand an author's **purpose**. Whether that purpose be internal and emotional or more objective—for instance, seeking to affirm or reaffirm the status quo—*motive* and *purpose* shape the way authors write texts across media. Many rhetoricians identify three broad types of possible purposes for communication: to entertain, to inform or explain, or to persuade. However, purpose can be more nuanced. An author's purpose might be to describe, to define, to influence, or to call to action, for instance; in fact, an author might have complementary purposes in crafting a text. By examining an author's *motive* or *purpose*—what he wanted to accomplish with the text—we can get a better understanding of the rhetorical choices he made in communicating with his audience.

Let's look at a contemporary example to see how rhetorical exigency combines with purpose to create persuasive texts. When Disney announced its acquisition of the Star Wars enterprise from George Lucas in 2012, people were shocked and even outraged. Many felt the need to respond through discourse—by tweeting, writing blog posts, composing articles in popular online magazines, and even drawing cartoons. In each case, the author felt prompted to respond urgently and immediately to what was widely viewed as a problem situation.

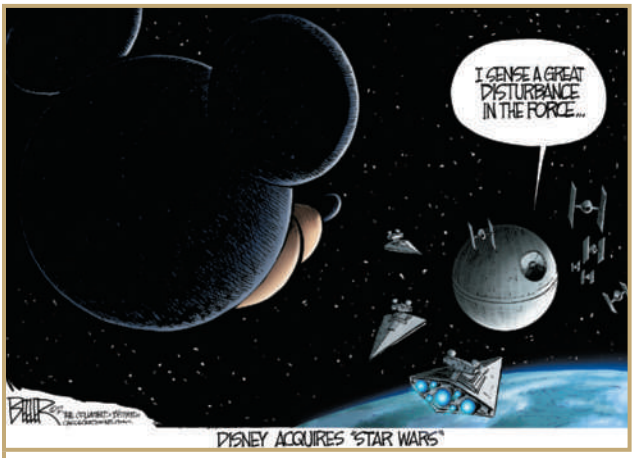

FIGURE 1.8 Nate Beeler's cartoon uses humor in response to Disney's purchase of Star Wars.

Consider, for instance, the cartoon in Figure 1.8 by Nate Beeler, an award-winning editorial cartoonist for the *Columbus Dispatch*, which he created in response to the merger. Entitled, "Disney Acquires 'Star Wars,'" the cartoon demonstrates the exigency that caused so many Americans to speak out or write about this surprising amalgamation between two enormous entertainment companies.

The giant head of Mickey Mouse, floating in space toward the galactic fleet, has an ominous look to it, creating a sense of foreboding. It suggests the *motive* of the cartoonist might have been to criticize this acquisition. In fact, this critique is further amplified by the way Mickey's head has been transformed into a version of the iconic Death Star, threatening to supplant the original space station/super weapon, which seems small and less imposing by comparison. Beeler is clearly presenting Mickey (and, by association, Disney) as the new "bad guy" of the Star Wars universe.

Moreover, the words emerging from the space station, "I sense a great disturbance in the force," echo Obi-Wan Kenobi's classic line from *Star Wars Episode IV*, "I felt a great disturbance in the force, as if millions of voices suddenly cried out in terror and were suddenly silenced." In the original context, Obi-Wan refers to the destruction of an entire planet and the death of its inhabitants; here the fleet makes a similarly ominous pronouncement about the impact of the Disney acquisition on the Star Wars franchise. Putting the visual and the verbal together, we perceive that Beeler exploits the imagery and lexicon of Star Wars fans themselves for a specific *purpose*: to persuade his audience of the negative implications of Disney's acquisition of Star Wars. It is a comic argument, to be sure, but it is an important position that arises from the exigencies of the situation.

Some writers opted for a different mode of editorial commentary, turning to Twitter to offer their perspective on the acquisition. As urgent responses to the deal, the tweets demonstrate how authors react in an attempt to use discourse to voice a personal position or in the hopes of modifying the situation. For instance, writer Andrés de Rojas, who goes by the Twitter handle @aderojas, tweeted the following:

> May the Force be with … Mickey Mouse?

He plays on the iconic phrase, "May the Force be with you," using ellipses and substituting Mickey Mouse for "you" to create a humorous tone. The final question mark, too, functions rhetorically, to convey his uncertainty over the implications of the acquisition. Raymond Kemp (@RaymondKemp) similarly responded to the exigence of the situation, composing a tweet that, like Nate Beeler's cartoon, adapts Obi-Wan's famous line:

> There was a disturbance in the force like the voices of a million nerds were silenced.

His tweet would have greatest resonance with readers familiar with the Star Wars series, but his critique would be evident even to a broader audience. By stating that "the voices of a million nerds were silenced," he demonstrates his motive or purpose: joining the outcry against the way in which the "nerdy" series of Star Wars might change under the ownership of the more pop culture-oriented vision of Disney.

Clearly, although tweets are brief, they still function as rhetorical acts. Authors who recognize the unique rhetorical situation of the tweet can turn these concise epithets into powerful editorial commentaries. Even the hashtags that writers append to their tweets add a layer of argument. Consider how a tweet about the Disney-Star Wars acquisition becomes more powerful when tagged with a hashtag such as #Depresseddarth, #Darthgoofy, #Don'tpanic, or #awholenewworld. In addition, some authors take advantage of the viral nature of Twitter to punctuate their tweets by attaching pictures, often mash-ups of popular images. For instance, over the first week after the acquisition announcement, scores of images spread through Twitter: photoshopped pictures of Mickey Mouse in Darth Vader's robes, saying, "Luke, I am now your father"; visual remixes of a Disney poster with the caption, "When you wish upon a Deathstar"; a photo of R2D2 wearing mouse ears; a still from *A New Hope* showing the three suns of Luke Skywalker's planet aligned to resemble Mickey Mouse's head. One of the most widely re-tweeted images was originally posted by Eric Alper (@ThatEricAlper): a photoshopped version of a popular image of the Disney princesses with a cartoon version of Princess Leia from Star Wars, wielding her blaster rifle, inserted in the middle. Re-tweeted over 200 times to an ever-broader circle of audiences, the image makes a pointed argument about how it might be the Disney world—not the Star Wars universe—that would change most because of the merger. In each of these examples, the author was responding to the exigence of the situation, using the best available means of persuasion to make his argument to a broad audience.

Considering the concepts of rhetorical exigence and purpose reinforces the fact that rhetoric, since Aristotle, has been linked to *action*. It is far from "empty" but rather can motivate audiences to produce particular outcomes. As Bitzer has argued: "Rhetoric is a mode of altering reality [...] by the creation of discourse which *changes reality* through the mediation of thought and action."

STRATEGIES FOR ANALYZING RHETORICAL TEXTS

1.4 What are effective strategies for analyzing rhetorical texts?

As we turn to discussing practical strategies for analyzing texts, it's important to understand how these can contribute to helping you develop **critical literacy—a** life skill that entails knowing how to read, analyze, understand, and even create texts that function as powerful arguments about culture and the world around us. In fact, some have argued that writing itself no longer refers just to words on a page, but that writing, redefined for the twenty-first century, invites us to express ourselves and make arguments across media and genres—whether in a book chapter, a podcast, a blog post, a video, or comic. In fact, in many cases, the most powerful arguments are those that combine word and image, the verbal and the visual; such multimedia texts often have greater persuasiveness and reach a broader audience than words alone.

This is the argument made by Scott McCloud in his groundbreaking book, *Understanding Comics*, one of the first texts to use graphic novel form to help readers understand visual rhetoric:

> When pictures are more abstracted from "reality," they require greater levels of perception, more like words. When words are bolder, more direct, they require lower levels of perception and are received faster, more like pictures.

McCloud tells us we need to develop "greater levels of perception," or *critical literacy*, in order to read with greater levels of perception. In fact, we can look to the brief passage quoted here as an example of persuasive written rhetoric, in which McCloud makes very deliberate choices to strengthen his point. Notice how his words use comparison–contrast (pictures versus words), qualified language ("reality"), and parallel structure (both sentences move from "When" to a final phrase beginning with "more like") in order to convince his audience that images and words operate in similar ways. Such attention to detail is the first step in *rhetorical analysis*—looking at the way the writer chooses the most effective means of persuasion to make a point.

What is interesting about McCloud's piece is the way in which he uses both words and images to make his point. To fully appreciate McCloud's rhetorical decisions, we need to consider the passage in its original context. As you can see in Figure 1.9, McCloud amplifies his argument about comics by using the form of the graphic novel itself.

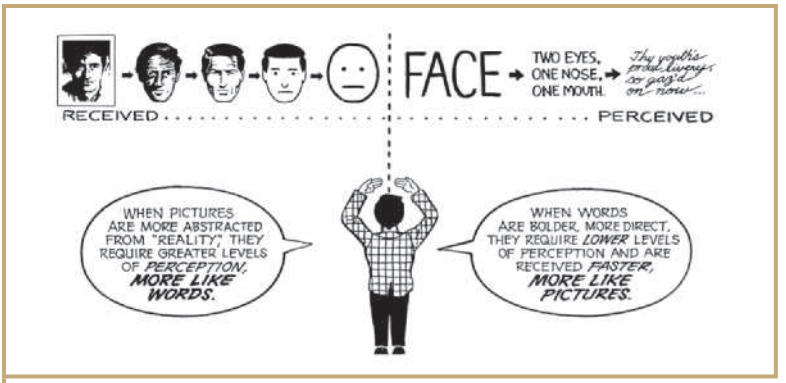

FIGURE 1.9 Scott McCloud writes in the medium of cartoons to explain comics.

Source: Courtesy of Scott McCloud

This complex diagram relies on the visual–verbal relationship to map out the complicated nature of how we understand both written text and images. The repetition and echoes that we found in the quoted passage are graphically represented in Figure 1.9; in fact, translated into comic book form, the division between word and image becomes a visual continuum that strongly suggests McCloud's vision of the interrelationship between these rhetorical elements. The power of this argument comes from McCloud's strategic assessment of the rhetorical situation: he, the *author*, recognizes that his *audience* (people interested in visual media) would find an *argument* that relies on both visual and verbal elements to be highly persuasive.

McCloud's example is also instructive for demonstrating the way in which authors can strategically adapt their argument to different media. More than ever, rhetoric operates not just through word choice but also through choice of multimedia elements—images in a commercial, the audio of a viral ad on the Internet, the design choices of a website or flyer, even the layout strategies of your textbook. Therefore, we need to develop skills of analysis for all rhetorical texts. We need to understand argument *as writing across diverse media* and we need, therefore, to develop *critical literacy*, or a careful way of reading, analyzing, and understanding media (visual, verbal, and other rhetorical texts).

Understanding how rhetoric works across different media will give you the ability and confidence to analyze and produce texts of your own. That

is, these skills of analysis will help you approach other kinds of texts rhetorically: scholarly articles, books, editorials, letters to the editor, political speeches, and—as writing continues to evolve into new forms—blog posts, memes, mash-ups, and more.

Analyzing Visual Rhetoric

When persuasion—discourse or communication intended to change—happens through visual means, we often look to investigate its *visual rhetoric*. As we saw earlier in the chapter, such visual arguments surround us constantly in our everyday lives. We can use them as a starting point for developing strategies for analysis that we can then transfer to how we approach analysis of written rhetoric.

Editorial cartoons offer a rich resource for this sort of work since, as cultural critic Matthew Diamond asserts, they "provide alternative perspectives at a glance because they are visual and vivid and often seem to communicate a clear or obvious message." Those messages might be powerful, but they sometimes might offend, as Pulitzer Prize–winning cartoonists Doug Marlette has suggested: "[T]he objective of political cartooning 'is not to soothe and tend sensitive psyches, but to jab and poke in an attempt to get at deeper truths, popular or otherwise.'" Marlette's words confirm what you probably already know—that cartoons are not just humorous texts but rather, as we have seen, they are rhetorical—they intend to persuade, and sometimes even to provoke.

Let's begin with the editorial cartoon in Figure 1.10 by Bill Bramhall. Originally published in the *Daily News* on December 4, 2014, the cartoon represents a pointed response to the news that a grand jury declined to bring charges against a New York police officer for the death of Eric Garner, a 43-year-old black man, who died after being put in a chokehold during his arrest. In Bramhall's cartoon, "I can't breathe"—Garner's last words—take on greater resonance when uttered by Lady Justice, shown sprawled on the sidewalk.

FIGURE 1.10 Bill Bramhall composed this powerful cartoon to comment on the 2014 death of Eric Garner.

By replacing Garner with the symbol of Justice, Bramhall is making a much stronger argument than just that Garner's death was tragic: his cartoon suggests that justice itself has been laid low by the grand jury decision and that the American people can no longer look to the justice system to defend their rights (with its sword and balancing scales).

Keeping this analysis in mind, consider the different rhetorical effect the cartoon would have had if it had been drawn differently. What if the central figure speaking the words "I can't breathe" were the Statue of Liberty? What if she were represented as African American? What if instead of being laid out on the sidewalk, she was shown crushed to her pedestal under three police officers, actively trying to restrain her? How would these changes alter the way you understood the cartoon's argument? This is, in fact, the composition of a different cartoon created by editorial cartoonist Steve Benson. In both Bramhall's and Benson's cases, the text was generated out of the same exigence—the grand jury decision—but made different claims about the implications of the event.

Let's look at another example of how a cartoonist uses visual rhetoric to make a powerful cultural critique on a similar theme.

Appearing days after the Bramhall cartoon we examined above, this cartoon by Adam Zyglis (Figure 1.11) moves beyond the specifics of the Garner case to address the tense U.S. conversations over race prompted by the deaths of Michael Brown (which catalyzed riots in Ferguson, Missouri,

FIGURE 1.11 Adam Zyglis's 2014 cartoon addresses larger issues of race relations in America.

in late summer 2014) and Eric Garner. Notice the ways in which Zyglis uses seemingly simple rhetorical elements to convey a multilayered message:

- He heads the cartoon with a powerful title that plays on the word "color" both to refer to how we "fill in" or "shade" our conversations on race (the way a child would color in a picture in a coloring book) and also to allude to the issue of "color" that in itself underlies many discussions of race relations.
- He features an iconic image of a crayon box, replacing the trademark Crayola symbol with an American flag to make the symbolic force of his argument clearer to the audience.
- Instead of filling the box with a multitude of crayon colors, he simply draws one black and one white crayon, underscoring how all other variations, shades, and hues (i.e., racial and cultural identities) are absent from the "conversation."

Looking at these elements, we can see his message: that conversations about race in America seem limited to a Caucasian-versus-African-American perspective. However, we can push this analysis even further. In choosing a crayon box, Zyglis seems to be indicating that we take a somewhat childish approach to these conversations. Additionally, if we consider the crayon colors to represent argumentative stances rather than symbols of racial identity, he also seems to be arguing against a "black versus white" approach to the issue, that is, an approach to an argument that relies on extreme oppositional stances rather than looking at the complexities or nuances of the issue.

As a final example, let's turn to a visual argument that responds directly to an event very appropriate to the focus of this chapter: the *Charlie Hebdo* shootings. On January 7, 2015, two Al-Qaeda gunmen entered the offices of the French weekly newspaper, Charlie Hebdo, known around the world for its provocative and satirical articles, jokes, and political cartoons. By the time the shooting spree was over, 12 people were dead and 11 injured. Charlie Hebdo had long been a target of criticism from many groups, offended by their risqué portrayal of different cultural icons and customs; Muslim readers in particular often expressed displeasure at its irreverent caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed. However, despite the newspaper's notoriety, the actions of the terrorist extremists were completely unanticipated and sent shock waves across the world.

As might be expected, the editorial cartoonist community in particular responded immediately to this assault on their French colleagues, and

FIGURE 1.12 Clay Bennet's cartoon response to the Charlie Hebdo shootings centers on the pen as a symbol for Free Expression.

newspaper columns and Internet websites were flooded with editorials—in words and images— reacting to this tragedy. Many of them relied on a central symbol to catalyze their argument: the pen or pencil as a symbol for free speech. One example can be found in Figure 1.12. This image by cartoonist Clay Bennett makes a powerful argument of resilience echoed by many of the other editorial cartoonists who responded to the incident. Notice the way that even with an extremely simplistic design, it articulates a powerful position: the pen, labeled "free expression," takes center stage on the white background; broken in half and yet mended hastily with string, it suggests that free speech might have been damaged by tragic events, but it has not been destroyed and is ready to be wielded again by the next author who picks up the pen.

Bennett's cartoon was one of many such visual responses to the tragedy. Graphic designer Lucille Cleric circulated a similar image on social media. Her cartoon featured three pencils stacked on top one another: on top, a sharpened pencil (labeled "yesterday), in the middle, a broken pencil (labeled "today"), and, on the bottom, the broken pencil, resharpened to form two smaller pencils (labeled "tomorrow"). In its original version, Cleric reinforced her visual message with the caption, "Break one, thousand will rise." She further punctuated her point by circulating it with the hashtag #raiseyourpencilforfreedom.

Her graphic accumulated over 100,000 "likes" almost immediately after its release, demonstrating its resonance with the "Je Suis Charlie" (I am Charlie) movement that swept the world within hours after the attack, as cartoonists, journalists, and citizens offered a hydra-headed expression of solidarity with those who had died in the service of free expression of ideas. In an interview with the website Mashable, Cleric made her motive

for creating the cartoon clear, saying, "I can only hope [the cartoon] will inspire people to use their pencils too and that there will be thousands of drawings like this very soon." This purpose—to inspire, to move others to action— speaks once again to the power of rhetoric, visual and verbal, not only influence people's ideas but, in some cases, to call them to action.

WRITER'S PRACTICE

MyWritingLab

Look at this editorial cartoon created by Adam Zyglis (Figure 1.13). Practice your own skills of rhetorical and critical analysis by analyzing the editorial cartoon, taking into account color, composition, characters, and action. Then, try to answer the following questions:

- Who is the audience for the cartoon? How can you tell?
- What is the argument? What elements of cartoon contribute to this message?
- What is the exigency of the cartoon?
- What was the author's motive or purpose for creating the cartoon?

Consider carefully how the artist uses words, images, and elements of composition to convey his message.

FIGURE 1.13 by Adam Zyglis

Analyzing Written Rhetoric

As we turn to developing your own analytical skills with regard to written rhetoric, you might find encouragement in Scott McCloud's point from *Understanding Comics* that "Writing is perceived information. It takes time and specialized knowledge to decode the abstract symbols of language." The purpose of this book is to help you develop the tools and acquire the knowledge to understand—or decode—the symbols we use to communicate with each other, including visual images but also written rhetoric in all its complexity. The strategies of rhetorical analysis that we discussed above—considering the rhetorical situation, exigence, and the motive and purpose behind a text—will

serve you well as you examine communication in its many different forms. However, while with visual rhetoric we layered in more detailed examination of image, layout, color, and composition, as we move to more conventional written forms, you'll correspondingly need to take into account additional rhetorical elements: word choice, word usage, structure, rhetorical devices (such as symbolism, metaphor, and allusion), and tone, to name just a few.

Let's look at an article that derives from the same exigency as the cartoon in Figure 1.1: the assassination of Gabrielle Gifford. If we return to the blog post by Barbara Morrill that we looked at earlier in the chapter, we can see how the genre of the blog affords her different rhetorical opportunities than those presented to editorial cartoonists. In her piece, Morrill writes:

> And while there are many examples of the violent language employed by the right: "Second Amendment remedies," "resorting to the bullet box," calls to be "armed and dangerous," to name just a few, it's more than that. [. . .]
>
> Because since the election of Barack Obama, the right, both elected Republicans and their minions in the media, have pounded the non-stop drumbeat that Obama/Democrats/liberals want to destroy the country, they want to kill your grandmother, they're shredding the Constitution, they're terrorist sympathizers, they're going to take away your guns, that they're enemies of humanity, that the government is the enemy . . .
>
> And that, as much as the obvious examples of violent rhetoric, can appeal to the extremist, the mentally unstable, or the "lone nut," to act. And last Saturday, one of them did.

The same way an editorial cartoonist sketches his argument with different shades, shapes, and strokes, so Morrill as an author powerfully draws her points through language. Consider some of the rhetorical techniques she uses:

- Morrill includes direct quotations of phrases used during the congressional election, listing them in a way that generates intensity and a sense of escalation (similar to the how the hierarchy of words on the flagpole operated in Figure 1.1).
- In the second paragraph, she switches to a set of images that attack the character of elected Republicans through criticizing their "minions in the media" and asserting that they have "pounded the nonstop drumbeat" as if at war with Democrats. This condemning language produces a strong animosity in the writing that might also sway a reader toward condemning the Republicans.

- Morrill uses a strategy called *anaphora*—deliberate repetition for rhetorical effect—by repeating "they're" at the end of the second paragraph to create a powerful rhythm and build emotional energy.
- The list itself relies on hyperbole and exaggeration ("destroy the country," "kill your grandmother," "shredding the Constitution," and so on) to present Morrill's version of what Republicans tend to suggest in their media statements.
- She concludes by reminding the reader of the exigence of the situation—how the "violent rhetoric" she has critiqued produced tragic action: the shooting of Giffords.

As you can see, such details can deeply move an audience. What we learn from reading this blog post rhetorically is that when you analyze written texts, you can apply similar strategies to those you use when reading visual texts: look for the vivid details, which in the case of language might include repetition, concrete metaphors, emotional phrases, and characterization of others that together act as what Aristotle would call "available means of persuasion" in writing. In this way, such written rhetoric, even while it disparages "violent language," is actually also forceful, even violent in its emphasis. It, too, is a form of communication that has as its purpose the goal of persuading audiences.

Let's consider a longer passage of writing. Remember Alex and her walk across campus? When she arrived at her Communication 101 class on "Media and Society," her TA gave her a handout containing an editorial about the *Charlie Hebdo* attack from the news site *Humanosphere*. Back in her dorm room, Alex sits down to read the article, writing **annotations** in the margins that indicate brief points of analysis or observation about the strategies of persuasion at work in each part of the article. As you read the article and Alex's accompanying commentary, add your own marks on points that you find provocative or interesting. Use the strategies of *critical literacy* that we've been developing throughout this chapter and ask yourself:

- Who is the main *audience*?
- How does David Horsey position himself as *author*?
- What is his *purpose* or *motive* in response to the *exigency* of the situation?
- Where and what is his *argument*?
- What rhetorical strategies does Horsey use to persuade the audience?
- What is your response to the text?

OBNOXIOUS FREEDOM

David Horsey

The title captures my attention—what does he mean by *obnoxious* freedom?

I have received many messages of solidarity from friends and readers in the couple of days since Islamic terrorists stormed into the Paris office of the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* and murdered 12 people, including several cartoonists.

Interesting to read an article by an author who usually expresses his opinions in cartoons.

Sets up context right away. Also, the *Charlie Hebdo* shooting clearly is the exigence for this article.

One friend—a prominent officeholder who, despite getting his share of barbs from reporters, nevertheless understands the absolute necessity of maintaining an unfettered news media—wrote in an email, "I am thinking of you following the France assault on journalists. It follows the loss of something like 40 journalists in the Mideast. Freedom cannot exist without people willing to ferret out the truth."

I appreciated his words, but I responded with a crucial caveat:

"Not only can freedom not exist without truth tellers, freedom cannot exist without obnoxious expressions of opinion, no matter who is offended."

His emphasis here indicates that this is the driving point of his essay. It echoes his title somewhat, too.

Throughout my career of giving offense, I have received an unending stream of comments from people who disagree with what I draw or write. Sometimes they are rude. Sometimes they are insulting. Sometimes they are seriously angry. And sometimes they are just having fun sparring with me. Only once have I gotten anything like a death threat, which was unsettling, but quickly forgotten. One guy offered to fight me, but he lived 3000 miles away, so the bout never happened.

"My career of giving offense" and the story at the end of the paragraph seem both blunt and cynical—sounds like the voice of an editorial cartoonist!

Love or hate the way I think, though, just about everyone would agree my right to free speech is unassailable. That's what makes America great, of course, and why there is near unanimous shock about the attack on the cartoonists in Paris. But, as people get a closer look at the kinds of images those French satirists were publishing, some are having second thoughts about all this freedom.

Repetition here ("sometimes") is very powerful.

Editorial cartoonists in the United States are an essentially tame species. Traditionally part of the establishment media,

Makes an assumption about his audience here.

American cartoonists mostly poke fun at obvious targets. Even when the cartoons my ink-spewing compatriots and I produce are sharply barbed and a little bold, they stay within fairly tight boundaries of social responsibility and good taste. I do not think that's a terrible thing—even though it encourages too many bland cartoons with elephants and donkeys and labels galore—but it does mean we very seldom really test the limits of what our readers will tolerate.

The martyred cartoonists at *Charlie Hebdo* were different. Unrestrained mockery, not reasoned commentary, was their raison d'etre. Page after page, week after week, they turned out scatological, simplistic images attacking not only the political figures everyone picks on, but the cherished images and idols of organized religions. There were cartoons of Christ partaking of three-way sex with God and the Holy Spirit; nasty cartoons of the pope that got the magazine sued numerous times by Catholics; images of Orthodox Jews reminiscent of the anti-Semitic art of Nazi Germany; and, of course, caricatures of Mohammed doing all manner of disgusting things, sometimes with his genitals exposed.

It is those images that outraged the Parisian Muslim community and brought the cartoonists into the extremists' line of fire. The magazine office was firebombed in 2011 and the publication's editor, Stephane Charbonnier, received enough death threats to justify hiring a bodyguard. The editor and the bodyguard are now among the dead.

Even with all our proud proclamations in favor of free speech, would a wildly iconoclastic magazine like *Charlie Hebdo* be tolerated in the United States? Conservative religious people would be deeply offended, of course, but neither would such a publication fare well on liberally minded university campuses. Given the social sensitivities in the academic world, a student cartoonist who drew even one cartoon of the type regularly produced by the *Charlie Hebdo* crew would be pilloried and run off campus.

My take? Most of the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons I have seen are crudely drawn, crass, and juvenile. Giving offense simply for its

Great word choice here!

Paragraph topic: state of U.S. editorial cartooning. Interesting that it ends in a critique of American editorial cartoons. Is he asking if these cartoons achieve their rhetorical purpose?

Now he moves to French cartooning practice. Effective comparison/contrast move.

These examples are really important given that many websites and newspapers refused to publish these cartoons.

Sets up background for the attack. So this wasn't the first time that Charlie Hebdo suffered for its "unrestrained" cartoons.

Great question. I think he must assume his audience is predominantly American readers.

I'm thinking that this essay is getting at a comparative between U.S. editorial practices and French ones ...

Nice move here—says they're crude, but then praises the principle behind them.

Powerful way to show multiple perspectives.

"Terror" is a charged word. Great ending line; echoes "Je Suis Charlie." He is Charlie, though he says he wouldn't cartoon that way.

own sake has never been my style. Yet, I appreciate the principle on which Charbonnier took a stand. He kept publishing outrageous depictions of Mohammed mostly because people kept insisting he had no right to do it.

Religious fundamentalists may believe limits to free expression are what the Deity demands. College administrators may think it is the politically correct thing to do. Politicians may believe it will keep their constituents calm. But, without the freedom to offend—even in the most outrageous way—freedom is circumscribed and tepid. The French cartoonists were constant offenders and most people would not like their work, but they believed in freedom with a dedication few of us can match. And they died for it.

As Parisians are now saying in response to the terror, "Je suis Charlie."

By annotating the essay, Alex acts as an *active reader* and begins to identify which aspects of the article's written rhetoric interest her most. Her analysis evokes the *rhetorical situation* (see Figure 1.5): she analyzes the way the writer (or *author*) uses language (or *argument*) to persuade the reader (or *audience*) of the article (or *text*). She also noted the rhetorical moves of the author: word choice, structure, style tone, voice. She could then use those points in order to formulate her own argument about Horsey's article.

As you develop your own skills of analyzing written rhetoric, you can also use annotations to help you identify and track your observations on how rhetoric works; these notes, gathered together, will enable you to generate your own interpretation and, ultimately, a persuasive argument. In fact, Sir Francis Bacon, the great philosopher, politician, and scientist from the Age of Enlightenment, developed a system of logical "inductive" reasoning based on the very practice of gathering observations and using them to construct knowledge, a new conclusion, or an argument. Echoing the position of Aristotle, he also saw rhetoric as that which moves others. Bacon asserted: "The duty and office of rhetoric is to apply reason to imagination for the better moving of the will."

The varied ways that you and your classmates might read and respond to this editorial depend on both *audience* and *context,* bringing to light again the importance of the *rhetorical situation*. Differences in your interpretation also reveal the importance of learning effective means of persuading others to see the text through a certain lens or way of reading and analyzing the text. That is, your task as a reader and a writer is both to study a text carefully and to learn how to persuade others to see the text as you see it. In order to learn how to do so, we will turn next to the key elements in writing an argumentative essay about your interpretation of a text, so you, too, can "apply reason to imagination" to persuade others.

WRITER'S PRACTICE

MyWritingLab

Practice your skills of rhetorical analysis on this 2014 editorial by Chris Baker, also known as "Angry Nerd," who critiques Disney's decision to "destroy" what Star Wars fans call the "Expanded Universe canon"—including comic books, video games, and hundreds of pieces of fan fiction and unauthorized Star Wars–derivative texts—as part of creating continuity in the new Disney version of the Star Wars saga. Annotate like Alex did in the example above, looking for elements of the piece that make it particularly persuasive. Consider how Baker takes into account the rhetorical situation as well as exigency and purpose through style and composition. For added challenge, consider analyzing the video version of this editorial, available through YouTube.

"IS DARTH DISNEY DESTROYING STAR WARS' EXPANDED UNIVERSE?"

By Chris Baker

Help me, George Lucas, you're my only hope. Darth Disney is destroying the Expanded Universe. Please come back, George Lucas; this is our most desperate hour.

I felt a great disturbance in the force as if thousands of storylines cried out and were suddenly silenced. The Star Wars franchise is committing "canon-icide." The fate of an entire universe

is at stake. You've understand: the Star Wars movies are the barest fraction of star war stories out there.

The so-called "Expanded Universe" has existed in comic books and novels and games for decades, and Lucas film is now air-locking it all. The Thrawn trilogy novels; *Shadow of the Empire* for Nintendo 64; the Tattoine manhunt module for the Star Wars RPG; the holiday special: erased from existence. Only a Sith Lord would decree that everything except the Star Wars films and the Clone Wars series did not happen. All future tie-in cartoons and novels—everything—will be forced to march in lockstep with the JJ Abrams sequel films. You know who else marched in lockstep? [The storm troopers.] And a new story group inside Lucasfilm will make sure that all elements in the Star Wars continuity fit together.

Normally I approve of an orderly and cohesive continuity, but this crisis on infinite Endoors is deleting incidents that are more interesting than almost anything that happened in the movies. No Expanded Universe means Boba Fett never escaped from the Sarlacc Pit, Luke Skywalker never flirted with the dark side, and Han Solo never befriended … Jackson Starhopper… .

Oh, Darth Disney, only you could be so bold! To think that I was cautiously optimistic about your stewardship of Star Wars. I was far too trusting.

The survival of the Expanded Universe is now in the hands of Star Wars fans. Fan fiction kept Star Trek alive through the lean years. We can do with the same for Star Wars. The more you tighten your grip, Darth Disney, the more Expanded Universe stories will slip through your fingers. You may control the canon, but you will never control the Fan-on. Your tightly controlled continuity can't handle the pulse-pounding exploits of Pedanticus Nitpickser, a bald bespectacled jedi, who lectures the entire galaxy about how lightsabers are scientifically impossible and how you couldn't actually hear explosions in the vacuum of space.

Strong he is in the force … of logic.

WRITING A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

1.5 How should I brainstorm parts of the essay, including the thesis statement?

We've seen that rhetoric works as a means of persuading an audience to accept the argument of the author. This is also true for the argument you make about a text. When you write an analysis essay for class, you are crafting a rhetorical text in order to persuade your readers (the instructor and your peers) to accept your interpretation. In some cases, your instructor might ask you to select your own text for analysis; in others, you may be assigned a particular text. In either case, ask yourself the following questions:

- What elements stand out that you might analyze in your essay?
- What do you know about the author or the intended audience?
- What do you know about the timing or context of this text?
- What is your interpretation of the meaning or message of this text?

As you work through the questions above, you can see that your task as a writer is to argue convincingly for your audience to see the text the way you yourself see it. In the case of Figure 1.14, what is the cartoon's argument about the NFL's response to recent allegations of domestic violence among the players? What details could you discuss in order to support your interpretation?

FIGURE 1.14 Gary Markstein's comic humorously tackles the sensitive issue of domestic violence in the NFL.

Your challenge as a student of writing and rhetoric is not only to identify the argument contained by a text but also to *craft your own interpretation of that text*. This involves careful assessment of the ways in which the elements of the rhetorical situation work together to produce meaning in a text.

In looking at Markstein's comic, you may notice many details—the uniforms, the hand gestures, the captions, the facial expressions, the shading on the referee's pants, the use of black shadows, and the fact that the lettering on the hats is yellow. However, when crafting your own argument, it's valuable to remember that a successful rhetorical analysis does not need to discuss every component in the source text, only those relevant to supporting your interpretation. In fact, it's also important to tailor your analysis itself to prioritize a particular approach. You might decide to focus on any one of these elements as you shape your overall interpretation:

- **Argument:** What is the text's argument, and is it persuasive? How does the author use evidence to support his interpretation?
- **Audience:** How did the author compose the text to persuade a particular audience? How did he take into account their context and predispositions to try to create a convincing argument?
- **Genre:** How did the author either trade on or depart from the conventions of a particular genre (such as the conventional essay, blogging, twitter, even email as we saw in Figure 1.6)? How did that decision influence the persuasiveness of the argument?
- **Style:** How did the author use style as a persuasive tool? How did he use symbol, metaphor, word choice, voice, and other stylistic devices?
- **Exigence and Purpose:** How does the cartoon respond to a pressing need? What is the author's purpose, and to what extent does he accomplish it?

AT A GLANCE

Selecting and Evaluating a Text for Rhetorical Analysis

When choosing a text for analysis, ask yourself the following questions:

- What is the text's purpose? To entertain? Educate? Persuade?
- Are there sufficient elements in the text to analyze?
- What do you know about the author, the intended audience, and the context?
- What's your interpretation of this image? Can you develop a strong claim that you can support with evidence from the text?

Ultimately, your analysis might touch on aspects of the different approaches; however, it is important to try to achieve a unified interpretation, so you probably will need to focus on one more than the others. To help you through this process, we recommend writing out your answers to the questions above. Many times it is through writing itself that we can access—and create—our best ideas.

Developing a Thesis Statement

In brainstorming your essay, you need to determine your interpretation of the meaning or message of a specific text (whether written, visual, or a combination of the two). In writing studies, we call this interpretation your **thesis**, or *the concise statement of your claim or interpretation about a particular text, issue, or event*. A thesis should be more than a statement of observation or a fact. It should also be more than merely your opinion. It needs to combine **observation + evidence** (based on the elements of the text).

To understand how to generate a *thesis statement* using your skills of critical analysis, let's work through an example. Imagine that you want to write an argument about the cartoon in Figure 1.15, a commentary on recent debates about immigration policy. How might you develop a thesis statement that persuasively conveys your interpretation of how this cartoon contributes to the debate surrounding the status of undocumented immigrants?

Start by jotting down what you see; make *close observations* about the text. Then use questions to bring your argument into focus and to make a specific claim. The end product will be a *working thesis.* The process of developing your thesis might look like this:

1. **Write down your observations.**

   Close observations: The cartoon focuses on the border between the United

FIGURE 1.15 This cartoon by Daryl Cagle uses engaging visuals and well-chosen words to make an argument.

Source: Daryl Cagle, Cagle Cartoons, Inc.

States and Mexico and on the way that we set up fences to keep illegal immigrants out. A key element is the gap in the fence that people are crawling through to get into the United States. The contradictory messages are interesting, too. The big sign says "Keep out," while the smaller signs are designed to draw people in.

2. **Work with your observations to construct a preliminary thesis statement.**

   First statement: The cartoon focuses on the contradiction in American border policy.

3. **Refine your argument by asking questions that make your statement less general.**

   Ask yourself: How? What contradiction? To what effect? How do I know this?

4. **Revise your preliminary thesis statement to be more specific; perhaps include specific evidence that drives your claim.**

   Revised statement: The cartoon in Figure 1.15 focuses on the contradictions in American border policy by showing that, on the one hand, the American government wants to keep illegal immigrants out, but, on the other hand, economic forces encourage them to enter the United States illegally.

5. **Further polish your thesis by refining your language and asking questions about the implications of your working thesis statement.**

   Ask yourself: What do you find interesting about this observation? How does it tap into larger social or cultural issues?

6. **Revise your working thesis to include the implications or significance of your claim. Sometimes we call this the "So what?" point.**

   Working Thesis: The political cartoon in Figure 1.15 offers a sharp commentary on the recent immigration debate, suggesting that official government policies against illegal immigration are undermined by economic forces that tolerate, if not welcome, the entry of undocumented workers into the United States. Yet the added detail of the hole in the fence suggests that such entry comes at great cost to immigrants who enter illegally.

In the working thesis, the significance appears as the final point about "great cost"—that is, the cartoon indicates that current immigration policies have